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## A SAFE INVESTMENT.

DURING the last two or three years, the attention of our readers has from time to time been called to the question of Thrift, its encouragements and discouragements. With regard to the subject of hospital relief, we have pointed out the weakness of that easy-going charity which gives indiscriminately, and does not pause to consider that to 'help the poor to help themselves,' and to teach them the lesson of making provision for a rainy day, is a far higher boon than any amount of mere alms-giving. The Provident Dispensary, which, it is earnestly to be hoped, will in a great measure supersede our present system of free relief, has the unspeakable advantage of inculcating habits of forethought and of preparation for the future. It is the object of the present paper to deal with a kindred question, which should commend itself to the careful consideration of every thoughtful man.

The subject of Life Assurance is one which has for over a hundred and fifty years been slowly but surely working its way and gaining ground in our midst. Beginning from the smallest seeds in the seventeenth century, it is now a mighty tree, bearing rich and ripe fruits of comfort and help to thousands. It is pleasing to find that in spite of much apparent extravagance and recklessness in our present mode of living, this important subject is attracting more and more popular notice and favour. Yet, widespread as is the interest in this important subject, it is by no means as universal as it should be, for there are indeed few heads of families who can afford to be indifferent to the possibility of making adequate and immediate provision for those dependent upon them, in case of their sudden removal. With the recent memory of such a catastrophe as that at Vienna, it behoves every man seriously to consider the fact as indisputable, that in the midst of life we are in death, and so to consider it that not a day shall be lost in securing wife and children against the bitter sufferings of grinding poverty. Let any father of a family take up

a daily paper and run his eye down the columns of 'Situations Wanted,' and he will find constantly repeated, 'Gentlewoman by birth,' or 'Widow of a professional man,' seeking for means of earning their daily bread as governesses or companions, and often for less wages than they in their prosperous days would have given to their cook; then let him reflect on the fact that in the vast majority of cases this is the sad result of the neglect of the head of a family to make provision for the future, and surely he will see to it that such a cruel fate shall not befall his own dependents.

Still, there are few men worthy of the name who do not mean to make provision for their children at some future time, and who would not indignantly repudiate the charge of deliberately intending to leave them dependent upon charity. Yet to most men, in the poorer and middle classes at any rate, it is almost an impossibility to make an adequate provision for anything like a large family by means of simply putting aside a portion of their income, and this even where life is spared to its utmost limit. What we hold is, that no man has a right to be in such a position that were he to be suddenly removed, those remaining would be left destitute. Now, every holder of a life-policy for a reasonable sum, has the comfort of reflecting that whatever happen to him, even should he be cut off suddenly and without warning, there need be no crushing poverty and bitter struggle to be added to the inevitable sorrow of bereavement.

The nature and principles of Assurance may be briefly summed up in the old proverb, 'Union is strength;' and put into familiar language, may be termed an association of persons agreeing to do in company, what, to the individual alone, would be an impossibility. In every variety of insurance this is accomplished by each member paying a certain sum annually into a general fund, in which capital becomes gradually productive. This is done on the understanding that at some fixed time each will receive his individual share with whatever of

interest and profit may have accumulated. In the case of Life Assurance, this fixed time is the time of death, and the sum insured becomes in the majority of cases a last legacy of love, to cheer the hearts of sorrowing survivors. Nor is there in this, as might seem at first sight, anything of the nature of a lottery; for although as regards the individual, nothing can be more uncertain than the time of his death, as regards any large number of persons nothing can be surer than the average duration of their lives.

This principle of average is by no means confined to the subject of Assurance; for it may safely be taken for granted that whatever event has happened once, will happen again, and in reference to large numbers, will happen a certain number of times in a given period. To take an instance from every-day life. In the Postmaster's annual Report there is always mention made of a certain number of letters posted without being fastened or addressed, and it has been ascertained, in reference to the total number of letters posted in a twelvemonth, that the average of careless senders is similar year by year. In the same way, it has been ascertained by careful collection of statistics, that in a population of a given number, there will be a certain percentage of fires, of railway accidents, and of deaths from stated causes—in short, a certain fixed recurrence of all the ills and changes that flesh is heir to. From this it may be seen that in dealing with large numbers, it needs no magician's spell to read the future with something like certainty; and it is this approximation to certainty which eliminates almost all question of risk or chance in reference to our subject, and makes it safe to reckon upon coming events. Surely he is the wise man who so reckons on the future as to provide for the one event which *must*—not simply *may*—happen to us all.

Nor is it possible to exaggerate the difference it will make to a man himself and to those near and dear to him, whether he has been content to take as his motto, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die;' or whether, looking bravely into the future, he has made such provision as to enable those depending upon him to be at least beyond the reach of want, or better still, to continue their ordinary way of life, should they be left at any time to their own resources.

But, apart from the primary object of making a provision for the future, there are other considerations in reference to this matter of Life Assurance which deserve to be brought forward. It will hardly be denied that of all things which tend to make a man happy and useful, nothing exceeds the formation of good habits—habits that will enable him to possess that greatest of blessings, a healthy mind in a healthy body; and towards this desirable end

Life Assurance gives a decided impetus and help.

In the first place, this act of providing for the future of others is in direct opposition to that natural selfishness which lies at the root of so much of the misery of life. The really selfish man who can see things only through his own spectacles, and who in all he says and does has only the gratification of self in view, is he not also one of the most miserable of men? For of all hard and exacting masters, Self is the most tyrannical, and the least easily pleased. Now, when a man comes out of himself sufficiently to look forward into the future for the sake of others, he is surely taking a step in the right direction towards unselfishness and happiness; for it is a distinct law of our nature that these two things shall go together; and if you want to find a truly happy man, look for one who forgets himself in thinking of others. This habit of unselfishness is, to say the least, likely to be encouraged by the keeping up of a life-policy; for it is not a single action performed on the spur of the moment and done with, but a thing to be remembered and provided for; and as each annual payment becomes due, the man is reminded afresh of the fact that he does not live for himself alone, and that he has certain duties in relation to others which he, and he alone, can fulfil.

Another point in connection with this yearly payment is the strong impulse it gives to the cultivation of habits of forethought, economy, and sobriety. In most cases, where the life is assured in a fair proportion to the income, there will need to be some careful looking forward and arranging of ways and means, in order to be able to lay aside the needful sum. And to this end there must be an exercise of that wise economy which is a blessing alike to rich and poor. Unhappily, this virtue is far too rare amongst us as a nation. It is perhaps most palpable in the case of the working-man who eats and drinks away his money whilst he has work, and then starves in the time of enforced idleness. But though most palpable here, it is no worse than the case happening constantly in the class above the labouring, where the object in life is to pass for being richer than is the fact, and where the earnings of the husband are spent in efforts to outshine the neighbours. The same folly may be seen on every hand, and anything that has a tendency to check this spirit, and to make income and expenditure accord, should have a hearty welcome.

Again, amongst the lower classes especially, the cause of half the misery to be met with is in that terrible want of sobriety which spreads ruin and desolation wherever it is found, and in the train of which follows the gloomy list of dishonesty, cruelty, and crime of every kind. Of those who fall under this sad temptation, a very large percentage are led astray through simple carelessness and want of thought. A young man earning good wages sees no reason why he should not do as he likes with his own, and forgets the fact that 'habit becomes second nature,' and cannot be laid aside at will and without a struggle. Now, it is an obvious fact that anything which tends towards making a man

steady and thoughtful, will have a most salutary effect in checking the formation of habits which, merely idle and careless at starting, have in them the germs of every sort of sin and crime. Surely, to face the future in such a manner as to induce him to provide for it on behalf of those who shall be dependent upon him, will help a man to study economy and thrift, and to shun a course which, at the very least, will drain him of his hard-earned money, and will give him no chance of preparing for a rainy-day.

Another of the incidental benefits of Life Assurance, and one to be by no means passed over lightly, is its tendency towards the strengthening of those family ties which so greatly sweeten life, and make so sacred the associations and endearments of home.

It is a natural and right instinct which makes us desire the respect and love of those about us, and the man must have sunk low indeed who would deliberately act in such a manner as to lower himself in the eyes of those who ought to look up to him with reverent affection. Yet what shall be said of those who are satisfied to live only for the present, and who are too thoughtlessly selfish to consider the possibilities of the future for those whom they profess to love and cherish? There are men, by the thousand, who seem to forget the fact that wife and children can think and feel for themselves, and that sons and daughters as they grow into men and women, will see through, and value at their true worth vague promises for the future which lead to no definite efforts in the present. On the other hand, it is scarcely possible to act rightly in this matter without much of benefit in the present, as well as of blessing in the future. They will be strange children indeed whose hearts do not warm towards the parent whose love shows itself in deeds as well as in words; and there are few wives who will not cling with a closer affection to the husband who shows himself anxious that she and her children shall never be left destitute, or exposed to the tender mercies of a world so often cold and cruel.

One other personal consideration well deserves mention, and this is the freedom from anxiety which security as to the future brings. There is no more prolific source of premature old age and death than the habit of worry, which in this competitive age is rather the rule than the exception. When to the inevitable anxieties of business is added the ghost of a future unprovided for, it is little wonder that body and mind sink under the strain, and that scarcely a day passes without its addition to the records of insanity and suicide. In how many cases might the reason and health be preserved, were it only the present difficulties that had to be met, and were there no need to live up to such high pressure, in the hope of being able to provide for the future! Of course, the mere fact of being insured will not save a man from the inevitable cares and anxieties of life; but what we maintain is, that it will save him from a burden which is otherwise almost too heavy to be borne.

In a further paper, we may speak of insurance under another aspect, in reference to the community at large, and show its decided influence in stimulating the productive industry of a country, in reducing the poor-rates, and in lessening the

cost of prevention of crime. Meanwhile, we trust that enough has been said to commend the subject to the serious consideration of the thoughtful and unprejudiced reader.

## VALENTINE STRANGE.

## A STORY OF THE PRIMROSE WAY.

CHAPTER XXVI.—‘MY DEAR,’ SAID THE OLD LADY, ‘YOU ARE FRETTING ABOUT SOMETHING.’

To Constance's mind, Val's precipitate flight spoke only of a longing and a despair which had grown unendurable. She saw him fighting for honour's sake, flying all he held dear, and going away into a void world which had no chance of solace for him. The true and honest ring of the old cavalier's verse was in her mind, with a meaning in it which was new to her, because she felt it echoing in fancy from her despairing lover's soul:

I could not love thee, dear, so much,  
Loved I not honour more.

He had fled for honour's sake; and for that, though it wounded her sorely, she half deified him. Once before—as she knew—he had struggled to escape her charm, and had failed. She had trembled to think of that; yet where on earth is the woman who would not have been pleased by so magnificent a compliment? When she could escape from Reginald's presence, she fled to her own room, and cried to think of Val and his love and courage and forlornness. He proved his love by running away from her, and with a rare magnanimity, trusted to her to understand and forgive; nay, perhaps with a magnanimity rarer still, trusted to offend her by the *brusquerie* of his departure, and so turn her heart towards Gerard once again. We who are behind the scenes, and know the course of circumstances which dictated Val's flight, can scarcely share her exalted notions of his delicacy, his honour, and his courage. But howsoever mistaken she might be, her thoughts of him were valuable to herself. ‘He helps me back to the path of honour,’ she said, even while she wept his departure. ‘I am pledged to Gerard, and I must be true to my word. I must try to love Gerard; that is my only real safeguard.’ Poor girl! When did ever love go forth in answer to commandment? Yet there was this help—that Val had put a distance of real reverence between them, and obviously meant to return no more until he could return in safety. She was proud, and she was pure-minded, and purely bred, and habits of thought and feeling are strong things even when assaulted by the Passions. She would not scorn herself so far as to fancy that if once she were safely married to Gerard, any man could move her to one unfaithful or regretful thought. And now she began to long for that union to which she had looked forward hitherto either with coldness or with shrinking.

No word from Gerard. She besieged herself with questions as to the meaning of his silence, and could find no answer. Her lovely cheek paled with the inward conflict; and Miss Lucretia, who knew of nothing but happiness in her fortunate niece's lot, must needs send for a doctor, who prescribed a tonic. Constance

submitted, but left his medicine untasted; and Miss Lucretia remonstrated, and had terrible visions of a premature grave for her beautiful niece.

'My dear Constance,' the old lady said at length, being fairly frightened by the girl's languor and want of appetite, and the pallor which had taken the place of her late lovely bloom, 'I must insist—I really must insist upon your taking the mixture.' She poured out a dose, and advanced with it, bearing the wine-glass in one hand, and in the other, daintily held between finger and thumb, a lump of sugar. Constance, too languid to resist, accepted the medicine, but refused the sugar. She had almost lost all sense of taste in her two or three days of illness, and the nauseous bitter scarcely existed for her. Then, being in a mood so tender and sore that all the fibres of heart and mind seemed raw, she began to cry a little at her aunt's caresses. 'My dear,' said the old lady with sudden decision, 'there is something on your mind. You are fretting about something.' Constance peevishly repudiated this idea. Her temper, naturally even and coldly sweet, had within the last day or two grown sickly and uncertain. 'My dear,' repeated the old lady, with gentle but firm insistence, 'there is something on your mind. Did you expect—him to follow you to town?'

'I don't know,' said Constance. 'I am not fretting. I am not quite well. That is all.'

'No, my dear,' said Miss Lucretia, with chirpy firmness; 'that is not all.' Miss Lucretia was one of those dear old ladies who are slow to receive ideas, but who having by any process absorbed them, hold on to them with marvellous firmness. 'You are fretting.'

'You are very unkind,' retorted Constance, who was made more miserable by the fact that she could not honourably confide in anybody, and so allowed her misery to recoil in anger. But she was so palpably unhappy, that Miss Lucretia would not be angry in turn. She only put her withered arms about the beautiful neck, and in spite of a feeble resistance, drew her niece's head to her old bosom and swayed her to and fro a little. 'I am ungrateful and wicked, dear aunt,' sobbed the girl, easily melted by this voiceless caressing patience. 'You are not unkind, are you, dear?' And she looked up with violet eyes full of penitence.

'Why should I be unkind to anybody who is in trouble?' asked Miss Lucretia, still clinging to her point, and seizing the chance of putting it forward again. 'I have suffered, and I can sympathise with suffering. Tell me what is the matter.' Miss Lucretia was very sentimental, as tender-hearted old maiden ladies mostly are, and she had a wonderful scent for a love-trouble. Now, 'Ask me no questions and I tell no lies,' is not a proverb of the lofty sort, but it yet holds a word of warning for those who care for wisdom. If you will insist on having the confidence of one who is unwilling to impart it, you ought not in charity to be too amazed if a half-confidence is imposed upon you, or even if you are set upon a wrong scent altogether.

'He might have written,' murmured Beauty in distress, suddenly grown double-faced. Miss Lucretia applied this stricture to the conduct

of Gerard solely, though, as a matter of fact, in Constance's mind it slid between him and Strange, and was aimed at once at both, and neither.

'Is that all?' said Aunt Lucretia. 'You little goose!' She kissed her fair burden patron-like, almost protectingly. The epithet 'little' addressed by Miss Lucretia to Constance was droll. Constance, even whilst labouring under a sense of her own duplicity, smiled furtively. 'My dear,' said the old lady, 'young gentlemen have so many things to think of. And did you not tell me that his father had announced his desire to make arrangements for your future? I have been making inquiries, my dear, and Mr Chichester, who knows a great many City people, assures me that the affairs of Lumby and Lumby are colossal. That was his word, my dear, not mine. Colossal. Now, if the affairs of a House are justly to be described as colossal—and I can repose the most implicit confidence in Mr Chichester, who would not exaggerate for the world—it will necessarily be a matter of time to make the arrangement which Mr Lumby suggests; and Gerard is probably quite absorbed in business, and is waiting until he can lay everything before you.'

This explanation was so satisfactory to Miss Lucretia, that she dwelt upon it at considerable length, the fact that Lumby and Lumby's affairs were colossal appearing to afford her the warmest gratification. Constance was too glad to be left alone to interrupt her, and she followed the tangled threads of her own thought whilst the old lady expounded the advantages of being attached to an establishment which was colossal, or, as she added savingly, 'had been so described by one accustomed to the contemplation of large affairs, and not prone to use the language of exaggeration.' So attractive did this theme prove, that Constance escaped all further questioning that night, and made such strenuous efforts to be cheerful, that they resulted in a real headache, which kept her in bed until evening next day, and brought the doctor again. Reginald, calling, encountered the doctor, and asked him what was the matter. The doctor responded in a round-about way, as doctors sometimes will; but he said enough to make it clear that the case was one for which some suppressed excitement was most probably answerable.

'You had best come no more to Jotunheim, Mr Strange!' said young Jolly to himself as he walked away sorrowfully. 'You have done mischief enough already, Val—mischief enough already. Girls are a sad trouble! I shall be glad to see her safely married to Lumby.' Reginald felt a considerable sense of responsibility in this matter, comfortably mingled with a feeling of diplomatic triumph. He it was who had discovered the hitch in affairs and had banished Strange. He felt proud of his own discernment and of the spirit and judgment he had displayed. 'Constance will be getting married in a couple of months or so,' he told himself, 'and Strange will have the good sense to stay away for at least that time. And then Val's such a butterfly fellow! He feels all this very keenly, no doubt; but he'll forget all about it, and as likely as not bring back a gold-coloured bride from the West Indies.' Comforted by these reflections, he walked on



briskly. The shops were lighted up, and the evening sky was clear. The air even in London had a prophetic sense of spring in it. Where do they come from, those wandering faint perfumed winds which sometimes, for a second merely, greet the sense of the wayfarer in London streets, and how do they keep their perfume in their journey through the city's unnamed odours? Reginald was a lover of the town rather than the country, yet the countrified scent greeting his nostrils as it passed, sent him on his way well pleased. Suddenly, in the Regent Street crowd one face flashed out on his, and was gone again. He turned and pursued it, but failed to overtake it. 'Surely that was Gerard!' he said to himself as he passed and cast an uncertain glance before and behind him. 'But what a face the fellow wore! He looked downright ghastly. I hope there's nothing the matter. All his people were well enough. The pace he was going too! Staring straight before him, and ploughing on like a madman.' A minute later he smiled, and shook his head with a knowing air. 'Love's a curious fever. He was going up to Chesterfield Street, and had heard that Constance was unwell. I'm getting quite knowing about the tender passion. Wonder when my turn's coming.—No; nothing in your line to-day, Cupid. Call again.' Beguiling time with many naive reflections, he walked on, and near the top of the Haymarket found himself entangled with a small boy who made proffer of an evening paper.

'Ony a 'a'p'ny,' said the small boy appealingly, shivering before him as he walked on. 'Terrible disaster at sea, sir. Orful failure in the City. Ony a 'a'p'ny!' The words 'failure in the City' struck curiously upon his ear, and Gerard's face, seen ten minutes before in Regent Street, came back to him in ridiculous association. He bought a paper chiefly to dispel that absurd fancy, and unfolded it near a tobacconist's window. There he read in large letters, 'Great City Failure.' The words 'Lumby and Lumby' followed in some connection, but everything had suddenly grown misty, and he could not see. He stood with a chill sickness creeping over him until his sight cleared again, and then read on. 'This afternoon, Messrs Lumby and Lumby, the well-known merchants of Gresham Street, suspended payment. The liabilities of the firm are estimated at half a million.' The street seemed to whirl, and he could not think. He held the rod of the tobacconist's shop-blind for a minute, and then, with uncertain step, went on again. Nothing was clear to him, within or without. The lights in the shops were hazy, like his thoughts; but out of the fog which seemed to have fallen on the streets came the face of his friend as he had seen it but a while ago, white and haggard and desperate. He could read its meaning now.

### SADDELL AND ITS LEGENDS.

BY CUTHBERT BEDE.

THERE are still some parts of our country that are beyond the reach of railroads, and are out of the beaten track, and which, therefore, are not much visited, except by those who go thither chiefly for the purposes of sport. One such tract of country comprises the whole of the south-western Highlands of Scotland, south of

Oban, the 'Charing-Cross of the Highlands.' Throughout Argyllshire there is no railroad. MacCallum More's territory and the Land of Lorn are not invaded by parliamentary and excursion trains. The country of Ossian and of the children of the mist knows not the roaring and panting of the iron-horse as he drags his carriages past mountain and loch. It is true that hundreds of tourists annually cross the northern neck of Argyllshire by the Crinan Canal; but that is a voyage by water, and they only get a glimpse of a small portion of the wild scenery of this most picturesque county. To get a sight of its southern portion—especially of the long peninsula of 'wild Cantire,' as Sir Walter Scott calls it—the traveller must take the long steamboat voyage from Greenock down the Clyde, round by Arran, and through Kilbrannan Sound, to Campbelton; whence he must get to his destination, or shooting-quarters, as best he may.

Sailing down Kilbrannan Sound, with the rugged peaks of Arran on our left, and on our right the bold range of Beinn-an-tuire—the 'Wild-boar's Mountain,' and the scene of the death of Diarmid, the Fingalian Achilles—we come within eight miles of Davar Island and the entrance to Campbelton harbour. Here, on the Cantire shore, and close to the water, we see a massive quadrangular castle, backed up by woods and hills, and in excellent preservation. This is Saddell Castle. It stands near a river which flows through Glen Saddell; and in the hollow of the Glen, close by the river, and surrounded with trees, is the once-famous Monastery of Saddell, now a mere ruin.

Legends gather around Saddell, like the moss and lichens on the remaining stones of its Monastery; and these traditionary tales, or *Sgeulachdan*, are told in the native Gaelic, on many a winter's night, around the peat-fire in the black-roofed heather-thatched hut, while the men and women knit and listen to the stories with an absorbing interest and rapt attention that could scarcely be realised by the average Englishman who reads his *Times* and subscribes to Mudie's. It is with these legends that I would chiefly deal.

The very name of Saddell may be said to come down to us clothed with legendary lore. There is a tradition concerning the building of the Monastery. A certain person having murdered his step-father, was constantly haunted by the ghost of the murdered man, and could gain no rest or peace of mind. He therefore travelled to Rome, in order to confess his sin to the Pope, who ordered him to return to Cantire, and there build a church between two hills and two waters; after which his troubled mind would be relieved. He made choice of Saddell, which fulfilled the conditions imposed upon him for the site; and there he built the famous Monastery. This tradition may perhaps have arisen from what is told of Donald, grandson of Somerled; how he went to Rome to obtain absolution for his sins, and on his return gave rich gifts to Saddell Monastery. Another tradition says that the founder sent to Rome for some consecrated dust, and made the building commensurate with the extent to which the dust could be spread.

This founder was 'the mighty Somerled'—who is mentioned in Scott's *Lord of the Isles*—Thane of Argyll, and Lord of Cantire and the Isles. He was slain in fight in the year 1163, and was buried in the unfinished Monastery, which was completed by his son Reginald, who, in addition to his other titles, assumed that of King. The Monastery was designed for the Cistercian or Grayfriar order of monks. In the Norwegian expedition, in 1260, against Alexander III., when Haco was at Gudey ('God's-isle'), now called Gigha, in the Atlantic, off the western shore of Cantire, it is told that an abbot of a monastery of Grayfriars waited upon him, and begged protection for their dwelling and church; which the king granted to him in writing; and not only so, but, when one of his own monks, Friar Simon, died in Gudey, they carried his body across the water to the peninsula of Cantire, and crossing its mountain-range, bore the corpse to the eastern shore, where the Grayfriars buried it in their church at Saddell, and spreading a fringed pall over his grave, dubbed him a saint.

The plan of Saddell Monastery took the form of a cross, lying in an exact position towards the four cardinal points. Its length from east to west was one hundred and thirty-six by twenty-four feet; and of the transepts, from north to south, seventy-eight by twenty-four feet. Part of the gable of the transept, and the aperture for a window in that wall, remain; but the dressed stonework of the windows has all been taken away, with the exception of a single stone near the spring of the arch, which has a moulding of fourteenth-century work. The monumental memorials are numerous and interesting; for distinguished persons from all parts of the country had their sepulchres here, including some of the collateral branches of the Macdonald clan. The tomb that is pointed out as that of the mighty Somerled, is in the choir, and appears to have been originally placed within the arched recess, or founder's tomb, in the south wall of the choir, near to which it now lies; and this supposition is probably correct. If so, the sculptured effigy of this redoubtable Lord of Argyll and the Isles represents him as wearing a high-pointed, conical bascinet, from which the camail, or tippet of mail, is dependent over the neck and shoulders. The body is clad, down to the knees, with the shirt or jupon, which is scored down with straight lines to represent the folds. The right hand is raised up to the shoulder; the left clasps the long two-handed sword. In the corner of the slab, above the right hand, was an inscription, now defaced and illegible.

Another tombstone, bearing the figure of a warrior, is said to be that of Mackay, to whom Robert Bruce assigned the lands of Ugadale and Arniele, in Cantire, for giving him shelter when he was a fugitive. Bruce had wandered to Mackay's farmhouse, where he was entertaining some friends, and at first declined the hospitality; but Mackay compelled him to accept it, saying: 'I am king in my own house.' The next morning, after breakfast, Mackay took Bruce to the top of the mountain of Beinn-an-tuirc, to show him the western coast, whither Bruce wished to go. Bruce then disclosed himself, and said he would give Mackay what he wished, when he had

regained his throne. Mackay asked for the two farms of Ugadale and Arniele; and they separated at the spot now marked by a stone called *Crois Mhic Caidh*, or the Cross of Mackay. After the battle of Bannockburn, Mackay went to Edinburgh, where the king gave him the title-deeds of the two farms; and when Mackay declined the goblet of wine that he offered him, Bruce in his turn said: 'You must drink it; for I am now king in my own house.'

There is also the grave of Archibald Campbell of Carradale, who was killed at the battle of Inverlochy, while engaged with the forces of Montrose. Here, too, lie Macdonalds and other distinguished men, whose graves cannot now be discerned from those humble mounds beneath which 'the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.'

The West Highland funerals were attended by a great concourse of people, and unseemly scenes not unfrequently occurred on these occasions, arising out of the jealousies and hot blood of hostile clans. I was told that early in the last century, when a funeral was being held in this graveyard, one of the proprietors of Cantire, pointing to the grave of the great Macdonald, exclaimed: 'There lies the bloody dog!' Upon this, the Macdonalds who were present drew their weapons, and would have slain the gentleman, had not his servant protected him and got him on his horse, when he galloped away for his life.

On a bank on the other side of the river is the Holy Well, almost concealed by long grass and coronals of fern. The water flows into a small stone basin, on the front of which remains a sculptured cross, the only one belonging to the conventual buildings that has escaped destruction. It is placed in a scene of singular beauty, and possesses the customary Holy Well legend—that those who drink of its waters should wish a wish, and will be married to their hearts' desire before another twelvemonth has passed over their heads. But two peasant maidens whom we saw there, were too young for any such flights of fancy, and had merely come to the Holy Well for the prosaic duty—made poetical by place or circumstances—of filling their pitchers with the clear spring water. As yet, they walked in maiden meditation, fancy free of any bridal of Saddell that might hereafter be their lot.

It is said of Reginald, who completed the building of Saddell Monastery, that, in conformity with a practice among the Scandinavian sea-kings, he did not enter under the roof of any house wherein a fire was kindled, for the space of three years; and he thus accustomed himself to hardships and privation. The rents of the Macdonalds of Saddell, as was then the universal custom in Scotland, were chiefly paid in kind—meat, meal, malt, cheese, poultry, &c.; so that, in the year 1542, the monetary rent-roll of Macdonald of Saddell, Lord of Cantire, and also Lord of Islay and Rheinds, barely amounted to one hundred and forty pounds sterling. But the Macdonalds were very generous, and would occasionally reward one who gave them a night's lodging with the grant of a farm; indeed, that of Coul, in Islay, was granted to a man who had given a flounder to a Macdonald who was much exhausted. These grants were models of brevity, as may be seen from two specimens: 'I, Donald, chief of the Macdonalds, give here in my castle to Mackay,

a right to Kilmahumay, from this day till to-morrow, and so on for ever.'—'I, Donald, sitting upon Dundonald, give you a right to your farm, from this day till to-morrow, and every day thereafter, so long as you have food for the great Macdonald of the Isles.' Dundonald was the castle near to Campbelton, on the western coast, where Macdonald went to receive his rents; and the cliff close to it is called 'The Hangman's Rock,' where, perhaps, short treatment was made of those who were behind-hand in their payments; for some of the Macdonalds of Saddell were very rough and ready in their ways—that one, for example, who used to watch from his battlements, and take 'pot-shots' at any passer-by, using a gun that he called 'the Cuckoo.' This chieftain, who was known as Rìgh Fiongal, went to Ireland, and, by force, brought back the wife of another man, who followed him; but who was imprisoned by Macdonald in Saddell, with the intent of starving him. First, he was shut up in a barn; but he sustained life by eating some grain. Then he was moved to another out-building, where a generous hen laid an egg for him daily. Then he was put in the dungeon of the castle, and died, after gnawing his arm and hand. Macdonald gave him a funeral, and told the widow what had happened; but she leaped from the battlements, and was buried with her husband. Then three Irish friends came over, and were hospitably received by him; but when he found them asleep in his barn side by side, with their necks convenient for his long sword, he cut off their three heads with one swishing blow. He then invited M'Lean and the chiefs of his clan to enjoy his hospitality at Saddell, and cement the peace that had just been made between the two clans. But he thrust them all into dungeons, and each morning, after breakfast, cut off the head of one of them. The king of Scotland heard of this, and interfered in time to save the necks of a few of the Macleans, by ordering Macdonald to come before him at Ceann Loch—as Campbelton was then called. He obeyed the order, and swore allegiance to the king; but before his monarch had sailed out of sight of land, Macdonald hoisted a flag of defiance.

One story is told in connection with Saddell Monastery, of the love and heroism of a young girl who was servant to a farmer in Barr Glen, which is on the other side of the mountain of Beinn-an-tuirc, and about seven miles from Saddell. This girl was loved by the farmer's son; but his father disapproved of their courtship; and with a base scheme to get rid of her, told her that he would give his consent to the wedding, if she, on that dark, tempestuous, snowy winter's night, would walk across the hills to Saddell and bring from the old monastery a skull that lay on the founder's tomb. She consented, and went out alone on her perilous journey; and in the morning, returned half dead with fatigue and excitement, but with the skull in her hands. The old farmer would not believe the tale that she told concerning the skull, or that she had brought it from the Monastery. She said that when she had at last got to the old church, she found its door open; that she groped her way in—well knowing the spot and the position of the tomb—and that

she heard mysterious moans, and the movement of many light feet and forms all around her. Terrified, but not disheartened, she made her way in the darkness to the old tomb, felt for the skull, seized it, and carried it away, pursued by the invisible forms to the church door, which she passed through and closed behind her, hearing, as she did so, a rush made against it. How she got back through the snow to Glen Barr, she scarcely knew; but she accomplished the task; and there she was with the skull in her hand, to claim her reward. Still, the old farmer would not believe her; and set out to Saddell with some of his men, expecting to find the skull in its usual place. But when they got to the old church and opened the door, there, within the building, were a number of deer, who had probably sought shelter from the violence of the winter-storm, and whose startled movements were what the brave girl had heard. And as there was no skull on the tomb, the old farmer was compelled to return home and give his consent to the girl's marriage to his son. They took back the skull to its former resting-place, and were married; and some of the deer were killed and cooked, and they had venison for the wedding-feast.

Macdonald of Saddell was crowned King of the Isles in the chapel of St Columba, on a small island in Loch Finlagan, Islay, where also was a castle, and a harbour with piers and gates to secure the shipping. He stood to be crowned on a large stone seven feet square, and received the sword and white wand of power. Five hundred chosen men formed his body-guard, and out of these there were sixteen picked men to attend him. It is said that a man of great strength, named Macphail, was splitting an oak-tree, when Macdonald approached with his sixteen attendants. Macphail appealed to them to lend him a helping hand; whereupon eight of them took hold of the split on the one side, and eight on the other. Then Macphail suddenly took out the wedges, and the two sides of the oak sprung together and imprisoned the thirty-two hands. Macphail, according to the legend, permitted Macdonald to go away; but he cut off the heads of the sixteen attendants with his axe.

The chief portion of the old castle of Saddell is a square-built tower, measuring in width about seventeen yards by ten, with a height of about fifty feet. The walls are of great thickness, and are without buttresses; but the summit is embattled and machicolated, with projecting turrets—also machicolated—at the four corners, and a fifth nearly over the chief entrance on the western side. The lower part of the castle has two barrel-vaulted rooms pierced exteriorly with narrow arrow-slits; and above these is the principal apartment, having at its north end an arched fireplace ten feet in width. Higher still, are two other floors of rooms, reached by a winding staircase, which is continued to the embattled parapet. The castle was inhabited by the Campbells until the latter part of the last century, when the House was built on the other side of the river, on a somewhat bleak spot, but commanding fine views of the shores of Cantire and Arran, and of the distant ocean.

On the small island of Freughilein, in the

Sound of Islay, was another castle, that of Claig, where the Macdonalds kept their prisoners; and another small island was called the Island of Council, where the thirteen judges sat and decided the frequent disputes among Macdonald's subjects.

An angry threat used in Cantire was, 'Dog on you!' or 'Dog and cat on you!' and it is said to have had its rise in the days when the Macdonalds used bloodhounds to hunt escaped prisoners. Wild-cats, according to the Rev. John Macfarlane of Saddell, might be met in the wooded glens at Saddell as late as the year 1843. I was told a story by an aged native of Cantire that bears upon this. 'In the year 1689,' he said, 'my great-grandfather, MacNiven, joined the Scottish Regiment at the age of eighteen, and was sent to Londonderry, which city was then lying under siege by King James II. The sufferings of the people inside the walls were terrible, and many of them perished from hunger. But although the old man my ancestor was upwards of eighty years old when he died, and had many tales to tell of that dreadful siege, and of his many adventures and fightings, yet he always said that he had never felt half so much terror in the thickest of the fiercest battle, as he had felt in combating with a wild-cat. It was on his return to Cantire from the wars, after King James had been defeated by the Prince of Orange at the Battle of the Boyne, and he had got as far on his way home as Alt-na-beiste—"the Glen of the Wild Beast"—at Saddell, and had reached the stream, which in those days was not bridged over; but there were large stepping-stones placed in the river for the use of the people in crossing. Well, he had stepped upon the first stone, when a very large wild-cat leaped out of a thicket on the opposite bank, and stood upon a stone on the other side of the stream, fully prepared to dispute the passage. The soldier also prepared himself for the combat by rolling his plaid around his neck and taking his dagger in his hand. The cat watched his movements with glaring eyes; and as MacNiven could not safely retreat, he resolved to advance. This he did, cautiously stepping from one stone to another, in order to secure a firm foothold, if the cat should spring upon him; and he kept his dagger ready to strike. He had hoped to thrust the creature through at the first blow; but quick as he was, the cat was quicker, and sprang upon him so suddenly and with such force, that he lost his balance and fell into the stream, with the wild-cat fastened on his neck. It was well for MacNiven that he had taken the precaution to wrap his plaid there, or the creature's bite might have been fatal. It never loosened its hold as they toppled over into the stream; and as they rose to the surface, it made a dash with its sharp claws at the soldier's eyes. MacNiven received it upon his left arm, and immediately thrust his dagger into the wild-cat's body. The stream was rapid, and reached to his chest, and it was with much difficulty that he could stand firmly on the rocky channel. He tried to hold the cat under the water, but could not succeed; and although he wounded it more than once, yet it contrived to keep its hold about his neck and shoulders, fighting fiercely at him with its sharp teeth and talons, and uttering the most terrific cries. The fight was as fierce as it was prolonged; but at

last it was over, and ended in favour of the soldier. He brought its body home, and had its skin preserved. It was as large as a biggish dog; and I have often seen it, and heard my father tell the tale that has been handed down in our family, how MacNiven's direst enemy in battle had been a wild-cat.'

## THE FISHERWOMAN OF HONFLEUR.

A TALE OF THE FRENCH COMMUNE.

IN FIVE CHAPTERS.—CHAP. II.

ANTOINE, having, as already mentioned, remained at home for some months after his marriage, at length sailed once more on the long fishing-cruise to the North Sea, which usually occupied a period of six months.

At this period the terrible war between France and Prussia was raging furiously. Paris was already threatened with siege, and the Germans were everywhere victorious. But of all the communities in France, the fisher-folk least troubled themselves with political affairs. Not that they were unpatriotic, for they heartily wished success to the cause and arms of France; but the French fishermen enjoy immunity from the military conscription—to which all other classes of the people, save the clergy, are more or less subject—on consideration of their being bound to enroll themselves in the national navy whenever their services are required.

So long as Antoine remained at home, Lucien had held himself aloof from Madeleine, who believed that, now she was married, he would cease to annoy her. She did not, therefore, think it worth while to cause uneasiness to her husband by acquainting him with the young man's previous ill conduct towards her. But no sooner had Antoine gone to sea, than Lucien recommenced his insulting importunities. He endeavoured to gain her favour by means of costly presents; but his presents were scornfully rejected, and he was plainly assured that if he did not forthwith cease his annoyances, she would take such measures to put an end to them as would give him cause for regret for the remainder of his life.

Thus compelled to desist from his persecutions and to relinquish his base designs, Lucien became more determined than ever upon revenge; and though he could conceive of no scheme at present by means of which he could carry his craving for vengeance into effect, he resolved to wait and watch his opportunity. 'Everything comes to him who has the patience to wait,' he muttered to himself as he returned, raging with disappointment, to Paris.

But then came the siege, and for months he was imprisoned within the ramparts of the city, and Madeleine hoped and believed that she had rid herself of him for ever. At length the siege was raised. The Prussians marched in triumph into Paris, and the war came to an end. The Imperial power was overthrown; a Republic was proclaimed; and the vile mob and *canaille* of Paris sought to establish the power of the Commune, and succeeded for a while in maintaining a second Reign of Terror, during which pillage and murder were rife, and destruction was wrought upon many of the public buildings that



the Prussian guns had spared. But though the headquarters of the Commune were in Paris, it had its supporters in other places, and especially in the towns situated on the banks of the Seine, between Paris and Havre de Grâce. In all these places its emissaries were active in seeking to persuade the poor, debased, and ignorant among the population to join its ranks.

And now Lucien Pierrot was again seen in Honfleur. He had at length worn out the patience of his father, whose eyes had become opened to his son's delinquencies, and, for the time being, the young man was paternally discarded. It was said that, out of spite, to annoy his father and gratify his own evil propensities, Lucien had leagued himself with the Commune, and had become one of the most active among its minor leaders. At all events, he was constantly to be found busily disseminating its atrocious doctrines; but persons who professed to be better informed in the matter than others, declared that Lucien Pierrot was in reality a paid government spy.

It was at this period that Antoine again came home from sea. He had been absent longer than usual, but had made a profitable voyage to various ports in his own lugger. Moreover, shortly before her husband's return, Madeleine had given birth to a son, which delighted the heart of the worthy young sailor. Little did he or the people of his native village trouble themselves about the Commune; probably few among them knew the meaning of the word; and so long as they were healthy and prosperous, it concerned them little whether France was an Empire or a Republic.

On the first day of his return, Antoine was seated, in the evening, opposite his happy young wife—now so proud of her maternity—in their snug little cottage, with the infant sleeping quietly in his cradle between them. Antoine had related the events of his voyage, and Madeleine was acquainting her husband with all that had occurred in the village during his absence, when suddenly rising from her chair, she approached a buffet, and took from a drawer a letter bearing the Paris postmark, which she presented to her husband. 'In my joy at seeing thee again at home, my Antoine,' she said, smiling, 'I had well nigh forgotten this letter, which I received a fortnight ago.'

Antoine took the letter from his wife's hand. It was rather a strange and suspicious-looking document—so at least thought the young fisherman. It was weighty, and bore a huge red seal, which was unbroken.

'Thou hast not opened it, my Madeleine,' said Antoine, who had rarely before in the course of his life had a letter addressed to him, and who looked upon it with something like alarm in the expression of his countenance.

'Nay, my husband. It is directed to thee,' said Madeleine. 'I had no right to open it without thy permission.'

'But thou knowest I cannot read,' said Antoine. This was true; the young fisher-lads had to work from so early an age that few of them could read or write. The girls were, as before remarked, better educated.

'If thou wilt, I will read it for thee,' Madeleine replied.

The portentous seal was broken, and when the

letter was unfolded, a piece of folded parchment fell from it on to the table.

Madeleine proceeded to read the letter aloud. It was nothing very alarming after all. It was written by an *avocat* in Paris, who informed Antoine, that through the decease of one Marie Lupin, at the advanced age of eighty-nine, he had inherited the sum of fifteen thousand francs, bequeathed by will to her grand-nephew Antoine Duroc, by the aforesaid Marie Lupin; and that it was desirable that he, Antoine Duroc, should come to Paris at an early day to receive the money, which was in the hands of the *avocat*.

'Fifteen thousand francs! It is quite a fortune, my husband,' cried Madeleine, laying the letter aside, and opening and reading the inclosure, which was merely a copy of the will. 'Our little Antoine will some day be a rich man,' she added, glancing lovingly at the sleeping infant.

'Marie Lupin!' exclaimed Antoine. 'It must be my old aunt Marie, whom I have never seen in my life! It is strange that she should leave me anything. Only think, my Madeleine, fifteen thousand francs!'

'But must thou go to Paris, Antoine, and thou but just returned to me?'

'Twill occupy but a few days, ma petite,' replied Antoine, who had never visited Paris, and though loath to leave his young wife even for a day, was pleased with the idea of seeing the great city.

'But just now, Antoine, when 'tis said there is such dreadful trouble in Paris?'

'It will not concern me, Madeleine. I shall return to thee as soon as I have received the legacy.'

Madeleine was much troubled; but it appeared necessary that her husband should do as the *avocat* requested, and she thought it would be wrong on her part to object to Antoine's undertaking the journey.

Two or three days afterwards, the cargo having been discharged from the lugger, and sold by auction in the fish-market, and the vessel having been left in charge of the mate, Antoine set forth for Paris by railroad, his wife, up to the moment of his departure, entreating him to take great care of himself, and to hasten back to her as soon as possible.

By this time the Commune had nearly run its destructive course. The newly established Republican government, with M. Thiers at its head, had been terribly frightened at the excesses of the Communists, and had resorted to dreadfully severe measures for their suppression. To be suspected was to be denounced and condemned; the government spies were active, and it was said that many innocent persons were punished along with the guilty. Lucien Pierrot, who had been on a visit to Honfleur, chanced to return to Paris on the same day on which Antoine took his seat in a railway carriage for the first time in his life—Lucien travelling by the same train. Unobserved by either, he had witnessed the parting between Madeleine and her husband, and wondered greatly what was the object of the young fisherman's visit to the capital.

To Antoine, Lucien was a perfect stranger; but Lucien would have recognised the features of the young fisherman even if he had not

witnessed the parting scene between the husband and wife. Burning with a desire for revenge, he resolved to keep watch over the young man on his arrival in Paris, and if any opportunity for wreaking vengeance upon him should present itself, to take advantage thereof.

The train duly arrived at Paris; and the two young men passed out of the *dépôt*, Lucien following close behind Antoine. He observed the young fisherman apparently asking directions, as a stranger, from several persons whom he met; and saw him, after he had wandered about for some time, looking around him with the wondering air of a provincial who has visited a great capital for the first time. Finally he tracked him to the *bureau* of an *avocat* in the Rue du Faubourg St-Antoine. Wondering more than ever what could have brought the young fisherman thither, Lucien remained on the watch till Antoine, in the course of half an hour, reappeared, accompanied by a clerk, who conducted him to a small hotel near by, to which he had been recommended by the *avocat*.

It was already late in the day; and believing that the object of his animosity was safely housed for the night, Lucien left the spot and went about his own affairs; but at an early hour next morning he stood opposite the hotel, and waited for the unsuspecting Antoine. Nor had he long to wait, for presently the young fisherman sallied forth, and proceeded direct to the *bureau*, which he shortly afterwards left, apparently well satisfied with the result of his second interview with the lawyer.

Anxious as was Antoine to return home to his wife and child, he would have been something more than mortal if he could have resisted the temptation to look around him in the great capital which he had now visited for the first time. He decided to spend the day in roaming about the city and looking at the grand shops, which displayed treasures such as he had never imagined to exist in the world, and in purchasing some trifling presents for Madeleine and his little Antoine, ere setting forth on his return to Honfleur early the next morning.

#### ECONOMICAL DECORATION.

BY THE 'MOTHER OF A FAMILY.'

IN my former paper on the subject of household decoration which appeared in this *Journal* (No. 904), I endeavoured to give a few practical hints as to the rejuvenating of old and shabby furniture, and the manufacturing out of trifling materials some of those minor articles of ornament which are certainly not indispensable to the comfort of a room, while they add considerably to its appearance and artistic effect. Since writing that paper, I have been fortunate in one or two further efforts in the ornamental decoration of my drawing-room; and as all has been done in the leisure-time of a 'mother' who has three active little boys to make, mend, and knit for, I trust that many of the young people who sigh enviously for pretty things, and bemoan their hard lot in not having money enough to purchase them, may be induced to try and make for themselves, at very little cost or trouble, many of the dainty trifles which they covet.

Nearly every household in this æsthetic age possesses at least one member who can paint a little in oil-colours. One day the idea occurred to me that, instead of the difficult, troublesome, and expensive process of china or enamel painting, it might be fairly successful if oils were tried for the same purpose. I at once experimented on a pair of ordinary white-ware dinner-plates. On one I painted a large blue iris, on the other a branch of vivid scarlet hollyhocks. They were a great success; so I painted several others in the same way, choosing large bold flowers for my subjects. I also painted a pair of oblong breakfast dishes, with rocks, dashing spray, and a boat or two in the distance. The margin of those dishes I carefully painted over with gold ink, giving them three coats; and now those common-ware dishes form prominent ornaments on the top shelf of the over-mantel, which is described afterwards. On the rims of the plates I glued dark ruby velvetene, which was cut to fit them accurately, and after being wired, they now hang on the walls; and no one suspects their lowly origin.

After so triumphant a sequel to my trials, I naturally became more ambitious, and bought several proper *plaques*, on which I painted either a pretty landscape without much detail, or a bit of sea scenery. I have been lucky enough to meet with a joiner who enters into my decorative ideas with great shrewdness; and he, for a very small sum, made circular wooden frames, which I covered with velvetene; then fastened the *plaques* securely into their new receptacle by means of pieces of wood glued on, or small nails hammered into the wood so as to retain the plate in its proper position; while a circular piece of brown paper glued over the back forms a discreet cover to the workmanship. An ordinary picture-ring screwed into the frame suffices to hang it up; and thus is formed a handsome ornament, and tangible proof that money is not always requisite to produce what is gratifying to our love of the beautiful. I may say that I use ordinary boiled linseed oil—two-pennyworth from any chemist's will last for months—or copal varnish—one shilling per bottle at any oil-colour shop—as medium for *plaque*-painting; and when once dry, thoroughly dry, they may be washed with perfect safety with warm water and a sponge. Vandyke brown is a slow drier; but a little sugar-of-lead, a very few drops added to the medium, will be found to dry much more quickly.

As few people have either time, means, or patience to expend on enamel-colouring, to them I commend oil-painting on china. Each frame requires half a yard of velvet or velvetene; the wood must be laid on the velvet, which is cut three or four inches larger, in order to allow for covering the sides and on to the back; a circular piece is then cut out rather smaller than the frame, to enable the 'rabbit,' or interior edge of the frame, to be deftly concealed. I cannot here enter into any further minute details as to the home manufacture of *plaques* and their frames; suffice it to say that ordinary glue, not too thick, must be applied to a thoroughly warmed wood; then a free use of a pair of sharp scissors here and there at the sides and back, prevents any unseemly crinkling. The front is necessarily perfectly smooth, and easily laid on.

Any coloured velvet may be chosen; but ruby or dark claret forms the most effective background, provided it be in harmony with other colours in the room. The velveteen left from frames makes capital pincushions, trimmed with lace, fringe, or gimp, as fancy dictates; and my clever coadjutor the joiner made me half-a-dozen small wooden brackets, with a shield above the tiny shelf. These I covered entirely with pieces of left-off velveteen, screwed a picture-ring into the top, hung them on nails, and placed a rare old china cup and saucer on each shelf; and very well they look. The wooden brackets cost but a few pence each, for surely every housekeeper has an old box to spare. The tasteful appearance of the walls well repays any outlay of time or patience to produce those simple designs. Individual taste will readily suggest a large variety of patterns for such brackets; but they must each have a shield or top as high above the shelf as the bracket goes below it, or the china loses all its effect.

At each side of the fireplace in the room where all those decorative fancies are displayed, are two ugly recesses. I resolved to improve upon them. I found a long piece of wood, which was sawn in two, for shelves; a ledge of black and gold picture-frame beading was fastened on the outer edge of each narrow shelf; the shelves were securely fastened one into each corner by means of a small wooden bracket, which I painted over with ivory black. Thus two neat useful shelves were contrived at very small cost. I soon painted a row of plates for each shelf; and as the wall-paper did not form an harmonious background, a strip of never-failing velveteen, rounded at the top, to form a graceful background to each plate, and to prevent an ugly straight line, was hammered on with ornamental brass-headed tacks, which may be had at any ironmonger's shop for threepence per dozen; and now my ugly recesses look quite beautified. A little table in each recess looks inviting, with a small bunch of flowers or an album placed thereon.

For some considerable time I was an ardent admirer of the 'over-mantels' or 'mantel cupboards' which are so much in vogue nowadays, in place of the old-fashioned mirrors, which in former days occupied the post of honour over the chimney-piece. For long I was content to admire; then the idea crept into my head that surely the manufacture of such an article could not be attended with insurmountable difficulties. The thought of purchasing such a thing did flash across my mind; but the large prices asked for them quite deterred me from putting that project into execution; so I must either continue to admire at a distance, or try to make a 'mantel cupboard' for myself. And this I resolved to do.

A large packing-case was called into requisition to provide the necessary material. It would be out of place were I to enter into details of the manufacture of the much-coveted piece of furniture; suffice it to say that with the aid of a friend who is clever at cabinet and joinery work, a most desirable result was obtained; and I am now the happy possessor of an elegant, artistic, black-and-gold cupboard, which occupies the entire length of the drawing-room chimney-piece, is four feet nine inches high at the centre, has two small

cupboards filled with old china at each side, each cupboard ornamented with two beautifully turned pillars. About eight inches from the top of the centre-piece, a narrow black-and-gold beading—bought at a picture-framer's shop—is carried along; and five or six inches underneath the beading is placed a shelf, in order to relieve the monotony of the large black board which economy compelled me to substitute for the mirror which generally forms the centre of the cupboard. 'Black Japan' once more came to the front, and two coats of that served to cover the wood with a brilliant black surface, which formed a capital foundation for gold-ink designs. The cupboards are open, so there was plenty of scope for artistic proclivities. Ferns, leaves, and conventional figures were the subjects chosen; and when I look at the cupboard, and consider how very small was the outlay of time and money expended on it, I can hardly believe my own eyes. The most expensive item, comparatively, was the turning of the pillars; the turner charged three and sixpence for doing the eight, but they form prominent ornaments to the cupboard.

I had some finely worked strips of silk canvas. Originally they were a pair of 'braces,' but the kid ends wore out, and what to do with the work, which was perfectly clean and fresh, was the next question. With the help of three broad bands of sage-green velvet, cord and tassels to match, a handsome cushion was speedily contrived; but the two short pieces left off were a source of annoyance for a long time, till one day the thought of transforming them into 'bannerets' occurred to me. The price asked by Berlin-wool shopkeepers for banneret-stands far exceeded my limited purse. Suddenly I thought that a rustic stand formed of twigs would be unique, artistic, and, best of all, cost nothing; so I took my boys for a country walk, and we soon had twigs enough and to spare. Two substantial pieces of branch the size required were bound firmly into the shape of a cross; and on the top of the cross I fastened several small pieces of twig, to look as careless as possible. Apple-tree twigs are far the most suitable for such a purpose; they are so like 'antlers,' which is the best effect to produce. I glued the crosses each into a round foot which came off an old ottoman, and then painted stands and twigs with the inevitable 'Black Japan.' The strips of embroidery were too narrow, so I crocheted several rows of sage-green silk on each side of the work, painted some stiff cardboard green, tacked the work firmly on to that for a foundation, and then sewed it on to the stand. My bannerets have been so much admired, that several have done me the honour of copying the idea, which is a sure proof that it is a success. Any scraps of work or old lace may be utilised in this way, and our homes brightened and beautified by exercising a little of the skill and ingenuity which every woman possesses.

I had a large supply of twigs left from my design, so I made a firescreen somewhat resembling the shields and Japanese umbrellas so much used last summer. In the first place, I borrowed my eldest son's 'hoop,' a good-sized iron one. Economically the idea was good; but that talkative young gentleman has made me blush rusty

red on several occasions by informing my visitors that 'Mother made my hoop into that bird's nest.' I covered the hoop with a coarse brown wrapper, bought at a draper's shop for a few pence, then scattered the twigs all over. I tacked them on with twine, to keep them in their places, and made an imitation nest of cotton-wool and feathers, which I carefully glued on in the centre of the screen. Our hens at this juncture kindly laid two or three very tiny eggs, which were brought to me in triumph by busy little fingers, and completed our screen by becoming the inmates of the nest. It is a most useful ornament; for as we always have a 'cold' fire laid, the screen can be removed in a moment; when by the application of a match, a cheerful fire speedily diffuses a warmth and ruddy glow, very acceptable in this fickle climate of ours.

For some time I have had a vague idea floating in my head as to door-panels; but my space for the nonce is quite exhausted, and all further talks about economical decoration must be deferred. My end will have been amply achieved if I have induced any one to try for herself how very readily the simplest materials may be utilised to form articles tasteful and pleasing for one's home and family. Truly, there are trials and sorrows enough in the world, and if we can add to its pleasures and gratifications, is it not worth one's while to try?

#### A PILGRIMAGE TO CHEOPS' TOMB.

THE re-awakening of a general interest in Egypt, occasioned by M. Maspero's great discovery at Thebes, in conjunction with the recent unfortunate disturbances that have taken place, may serve as apology for adding anything, however small, to the already voluminous literature on the country of the Nile. We shall endeavour to give an account of a day's drive, under the glorious blue of an Egyptian winter sky, to the monuments that stand on the limestone platform of Gizeh.

We have had our first peep at the Pyramids from the walls of the Citadel of Cairo; and have had the same sensations that every traveller experiences when he looks for the first time across the dirty and odoriferous city to the narrow strip of green, bright with early-springing corn, which constitutes arable Egypt; and beyond this to the dreary sand-waste, where the eye rests upon the pyramids that loom out of the far haze of the Libyan Desert. In order to have a nearer view of these monumental antiquities, we left Cairo in the early morning of a brilliant day, sweeping out in carriage and pair, with *sais* or runner in cleanest of linen garments and richest of embroidered vests, to warn the unwary foot-passenger out of the path of our august progress; over the iron bridge, and along the road which was constructed for the convenience of our Prince and Princess of Wales when they paid their visit to the Pyramids. It is a shady road, with trees well and regularly planted, shutting out a portion of the hot sunshine. It is at times hard work for our poor horses; but the Egyptian driver does not spare the whip; and the wheels

drag heavily through the deep sand, which in places has drifted up over the road from the surrounding desert.

We have been pursued for over a mile by two lithe Arabs, who were picketed at an outpost, to obtain the earliest possible intelligence of the arrival of the legitimate prey of the desert—the Englishman. They are clean enough, these two men, their white linen tunics and trousers almost spotless; how they keep them so, does not appear, for their homes are no better than pigsties. They have been trying all the way along to do a little business in *curios* of suspicious genuineness, producing *scarabæi* and *osirides* of undoubted Birmingham stamp from mysterious depths in their tunics, and pressing us to buy; but we are on our guard, and we mention the word 'Brummagem,' which is quickly understood, though the innuendo is silyly deprecated by the grinning Arabs.

Our carriage is at length fast in the sand, so we are compelled to walk the few hundred yards that lie between us and the base of Cheops' great building. Our troubles now begin in real earnest. The birds are gathering thick around their prey. They are swooping down, the halt, the blind, and the lame, over that sandy hill, from the village which lies dirty, dog-infested, and sun-baked almost at the foot of the Big Pyramid. There are fully thirty Arabs about us now, clamouring, voluble and demonstrative, and 'the cry is 'still, they come.' One yells that he is the man to take us into the most hidden chamber, Cheops or any one else ever built—he is indeed ready for anything. Another shouts that he is prepared to run up and down as many pyramids as lie within reach in as many minutes as we choose to name. A constant amount of good-natured chaff goes on amongst themselves.—'Him not the right man, sar;' 'Him let you go, and you fall;' 'Him afraid to go up, sar'—and so on, and so on; this all screamed at the highest pitch of the shrill Arab voice; while beneath this upper stratum of uproar is an under-current, steady and ceaseless in its flow, of demands for *backsheesh*. A few days will serve to steel a very Wilberforce against the begging of the people. As a fact, from the moment of one's leaving one's hotel until one's return, the demand for charity never ceases. Money, money, money! We have heard from a group of little naked urchins, who sat far away from the public highway in the middle of a field, cries of 'Backsheesh, sheesh, backsheesh!' when there existed not the smallest probability of our stopping the carriage and satisfying their craving for coin; nor did they appear to expect that we should, for they remained sitting where they were, screaming to us from mere habit. Sir Gardner Wilkinson has suggested that this is merely the Egyptian's mode of wishing a 'good-day;' but we question whether any traveller will subscribe to this opinion after experience.

Another hundred yards, and the Pyramids tower dark and massive above us with their multitudinous steps, which fatigue the eye to count. Now, we are wading ankle-deep in sand, pushed and pulled hither and thither by a clamouring, bargain-driving mob of swarthy Arabs; and are half maddened by the heat of the fierce sun and the demands for backsheesh, till we long



to hit out, were it but to make a breach in the crowd to let in some air. We do our best to strike a bargain with some of the rabble; but it is useless. If we speak to one, another is certain to shout depreciatory remarks as to his ability to act as guide. If we settle upon an especial one to take us to the top of the pyramid, there is immediately an outcry. They are like so many children scrambling for scattered sweets. At length, to our intense disgust, we learn that they are incapable of acting on their own responsibility in the matter. We must await the arrival of the Sheik, who is soon seen coming along as fast as his legs can carry him—a tall, lanky, grizzled old man, brandishing a stick and gesticulating wildly. There is a lull in the storm now; for his advent appears to fill his dependents with wholesome fear; and, moreover, he is not scrupulous about freely using his stick on their shoulders and bare shins. We are admitted to a parley with his Royal Highness, and conclude a treaty with him, under the terms of which he undertakes to provide us with two men to haul us up the pyramid, and one to assist us in the exploration of the interior, for the sum of four francs.

Before, however, we do either, we will take a general view of this grand monument and of its brethren, and try and understand, from what we have heard and read, how these structures were put together. First, let us know then, that the greatest of the pyramids which stand at Gizeh was erected, almost to a certainty, by one Cheops, a monarch of the fourth Egyptian dynasty, but is by no means, as regards the details of its construction, a typical specimen of the Egyptian pyramid. It appears to be rather the highest development of an original form, of which there are innumerable examples to be found for four hundred miles along the banks of the Nile; in fact, so far as the dates of construction can be determined, it would appear that there are still in existence many of an earlier period than this one of King Cheops. For instance, there is a famous example at Sakkara, some fifteen miles from Cairo, known as the 'Stepped Pyramid,' which is considered by authorities the oldest building in the world. So we must leave this particular pyramid of Cheops out of the question for the time being, and understand the general method employed by the early Egyptians in constructing a pyramid.

When a monarch came to his throne, he immediately set about the making of a last resting-place for his royal bones; so his officers and head-masons having chosen a suitable base, they engaged, at merely nominal wages, vast *corvées* of workmen, and forced them to work unremittingly until their task was completed. The first step was to quarry out, at some considerable depth below the surface of the rock, a chamber, from which the architects ran a slanting passage at a certain determined angle with the plane of the surface of the plateau, until the mouth of it opened to the light. The builders then placed a square layer of masonry, some four or five feet in thickness, above the chamber and passage, in such a way as that the mouth of the passage aforesaid should appear exactly at the base of one of the sides. Thus much, and no more, was done the first year of the king's reign. The next year,

a similar but smaller layer of masonry was placed upon the first, so that it formed a high step all round with the lower one. The third year, a third but still smaller layer was placed atop the second; and so on year by year, until the pointed stone crowned the summit. Should the king meanwhile have died before the completion of the work, his body was placed in the chamber, and what his mighty tombstone wanted of being finished, was hurried up.

The building is now in the rough; there is much nice work about it; each side must present a smooth, polished surface, which must receive some beautifully cut hieroglyphics. How is this to be effected? It is a long and troublesome task; but time and labour were of small account in the eyes of the ancient Egyptian; he built for all time. So the first thing the masons of the old world do is to fill up with firmly cemented masonry the angles of the steps, until, if we looked up from the base to the summit, we should find that the sides presented a tolerably even surface, but yet crossed at regular intervals by the sharp projecting corners of the steps. The master-builder is not satisfied with it yet, so he sends his workmen up to the summit, and they commence from there the laborious process of chiselling down the protruding corners, and of afterwards smoothing and polishing, until the sides catch the sun's rays upon a white limestone surface, the brilliancy of which is seen miles and miles away up and down the Nile Valley. When the body was placed in its sepulchre, the passage was sealed up, that none but those who knew the secret should ever find the entrance. This, then, was the method of constructing the ordinary Egyptian pyramid.

But we are paying a visit to a pyramid which is an extraordinary exception to the preceding general law. For some unaccountable reason, except it were from a haughty desire to eclipse all former monarchs in the magnificence of his tomb, the mighty builder of this pyramid extended his first layer of masonry far beyond the mouth of the passage which runs up from the chamber beneath, so that he is under the necessity of continuing the passage at the same angle through the solid masonry, until it opens to the air some distance up the side of the pyramid; and not alone this, but he runs other passages, and constructs other chambers, high up in the depth of the masonry, with a strange and mysterious unity of design that completely baffles modern archaeologists. And most wonderful of all, when this stupendous work is finished, it is carefully sealed up; and so it has remained for thousands of years, until the rude hands of curious explorers forced a way into its inner sanctuary.

We are undecided as to which course to adopt, whether to visit the top or the interior of Cheops first. It is finally decided for the latter; so, accompanied by the whole rabble, with our picked men, and provided with candles, we mount the heap of rubbish that leads up to the little four-foot-square flue which is the sole entrance to the great mystery. Here let us offer a few words of advice, gathered from personal experience, as to exploring the interior. Go in very lightly clad, as the heat is oppressive, and the atmosphere rather stifling. It is not every one who can

perform the feat with impunity. We have met with some who have fainted outright upon coming to ground again; some who have turned back, fearing such an event. It is astonishing indeed how any pure air can possibly make its way into the passages and chambers, for the narrow ventilating shafts which run from the King's Chamber to the outer air have long since been choked by the accumulated dust of centuries. There is just sufficient air, but no more, to support life. The Arabs will carry anything the explorer needs to remove, so all superfluous clothing may be intrusted to the guide.

It is unwise to accept the services of more than one Arab for each visitor, as, if he finds himself in the majority, 'the son of the desert' is only too ready to assert himself by compelling his employer to pay more than is lawfully due to him. A friend of ours went in alone with two guides, and when they had led him far into the interior, they blew out the candles, and refused to relight them unless gold were given them. It was an awkward position. The darkness was indeed Egyptian for intensity; and the presence of two lithe, barefooted, unprepossessing Arabs, whose movements were excessively uncertain, was anything but pleasant. Fortunately, they are arrant cowards; and our friend getting a good hold of a swarthy neck in the dark, shook one of the rascals till he awakened the echoes of the King's Chamber with his cries for mercy; and the candles were at once relit. This is no uncommon trick. If the explorer exhibits any fear in entering the dark passages, through which at times he will have to pass on all-fours, the Arabs mark him soon enough as one from whom to extort money. The handle of a revolver protruding from a pocket is a most effective deterrent from annoyance; the traveller never needs to use it, but its presence is wholesome.

Our candles are lighted now, and we enter the flue, and have a weight of masonry above us which gives us oppressive nightmare sensations; and we are able to realise in part the awful situation of the man in Poe's tale upon whom the inexorable iron walls were slowly closing in. How puny one feels—how helpless! The floor is slippery as glass, the limestone casing having become like white polished marble, so we have to look to our footsteps. It is very dusty within too, a fine white powder soon covering our clothes. We are now at the bottom of the first passage, which stretches downwards to the level of the base of the pyramid; and here we come across signs of violent disruption, caused by the ignorant efforts of an early explorer to force his way into the building. From this point, a passage somewhat wider than the last rises dark before us; and we push on for one hundred and twenty-four feet, until we stand at the lower end of the Grand Gallery, which slopes upwards at the same incline. There is now plenty of space above our heads, for this so-called Gallery is twenty-eight feet in height. Its walls are formed of layers of masonry, each layer projecting beyond the one immediately below by three or four inches, so that towards the roof the walls close in considerably. Two banks of stonework run along the sides of this Gallery, pierced at intervals by curious square holes; for what purpose, it is difficult to conceive.

From the spot on which we now stand, here at the lower end of the Gallery, there runs a passage right into the centre of the building, parallel with its base, until it opens into what has been fancifully denominated the Queen's Chamber—a chamber twenty feet in height, with a pointed ceiling formed of immense slabs of stone, accurately fitted. Having seen this, we creep up the length of the Grand Gallery between the two banks of masonry, making use of the pigeon-holes to assist our slipping feet, until we at length stand within the furthest recess of the pyramid, the King's Chamber. Here, some say is the spot the mighty Cheops chose for his last resting-place, that he might differ in this respect from all preceding monarchs. Here lies the sarcophagus, now lidless and broken, which some say he hewed out of a block of Syene granite, for his own mummy. But the historians tell us how he never attained to the fulfilment of his wishes; for that his people, indignant at the enormous outlay in the building of this gigantic monument, remonstrated so effectually with his executors, that they were compelled to conceal his body, and afterwards bury it beneath the waters of the Nile.

This tomb-theory, as we may call it, has been rejected by some eminent Egyptologists, who see rather in these wonderful passages and chambers, a purpose and unity of design, which cannot be accounted for on the grounds of its being merely the efforts of a king to conceal perpetually the place of his sepulture. They assume to have discovered, after careful measurement conducted with patience and labour worthy of a better result, an extraordinary agreement of the proportions of the chambers, passages, and sarcophagus with the world-wide standards of lengths and capacities. They go very far, and say: 'Here we have the original revelation from heaven to man of our weights-and-measure system;' though why, if it be so, the being to whom it was revealed shut the knowledge up for ever, does not appear.

This theory is hardly satisfactory. No one can, however, for a moment question the unity of purpose exhibited throughout the building; but we should be content with a more reasonable deduction, somewhat like this: Cheops was a man far in advance of his age; he had sounded depths of mathematical and astronomical science far beyond the reach of his contemporaries; he stood alone in his own age, and feeling this superiority, with the haughtiness of a great intellect and despotic ruler, he said to himself: 'For what purpose is all my learning? These my people do not understand my researches. I will, therefore, in the building of my tomb erect a monument which will contain an everlasting record of my discoveries, and order my builders, when I am gone, to seal them up for ever. For I cannot think, in the slow progress of mankind, that any intellect comparable to mine will appear; so I will leave all my discoveries enshrouded in a mystery, and no key wherewith to solve it.' And indeed, if it was the intention of the monarch to mystify posterity, he has succeeded most thoroughly in his object.

We are back to the surface again, breathless, hot, and dusty; and now the ascent lies before us. Hauled up the whole four hundred and

fifty feet by two Arabs, and after many a rest by the way, we reach the summit, where one would suppose some peace and silence were to be found. But no such good fortune awaits the traveller. The novelty of ascending that gigantic outside staircase, with steps from four to five feet high, never seems to wear off from the Arab mind, and so the tribe follow us up, still persistent in their efforts to impose Brummagem goods upon us.

The air that blows across the desert is bracing in the extreme, and at this height—higher than St Paul's dome—we are free from the disagreeable odours of Egyptian villages. The waste of sand around is sad and depressing. We have a good bird's-eye view of the immediate surroundings of the pyramid. Besides the three great pyramids, there are several smaller specimens scattered about, crumbling to ruin and half-buried in desert sand; and also innumerable tombs, most of which have been opened by Lepsius and other Egyptologists. Close at hand, too, is the temple of the Sphinx, built by King Chephren, brother to Cheops, to whom Herodotus ascribes the construction of the second pyramid; and last, but most imposing, is the weather-beaten Sphinx itself, on guard over this vast Valley of Dry Bones, watching for the first streak of the dawn of that resurrection in which the old Egyptian believed so firmly.

The last piastres have been distributed among the begging Arabs; and with a crack of our driver's whip we start, the evening shades closing in upon us, and soon shutting out from our view those high-piled, hoary monuments of the past.

### EPHING FOREST.

WITHIN a few miles of the great throbbing heart of London, there still remains a portion of the royal Forest of Waltham, which in ancient times covered a great tract of country, and extended to the very walls of the city. Its vast area included the Forests of Hainault and Epping, of which some six thousand acres of picturesque woodland have, after much opposition and many difficulties, been secured for public health and recreation. By the new charter of Forest rights, not only wide stretches of land, after years of cultivation, have been redeemed from inclosure, and restored to the Forest limits, but nearly thirteen miles of almost unbroken woodland scenery, forming perhaps the most extensive pleasure-ground in Europe, have been formally dedicated by the Queen to the use and enjoyment of her people for all time.

So far back as the twelfth century, in the reign of King Stephen, and again by a charter of King John, much of the outlying land was disafforested. Edward I.'s 'Charta de Foresta' still further reduced its bounds, which were again determined by Charles I.; and since that time, they have been diminished year by year by illegal encroachments. Not only the residents of East London, but the nation at large must feel grateful to the Corporation of the City for preserving and restoring as far as possible to its ancient limits, a landmark, grand in itself, and interesting by right of its connection with splendid and historic memories.

Strange indeed was the aspect presented by the ancient Forest at the inaugural ceremony on that bright day in May, when the cheers and shouts and merriment of half a million of people broke the classic stillness of the woods; where gaudy uniforms of guards of honour, military bands, and civic dignitaries, made a charming contrast with the golden gorse and broom, and the green background of the wooded slopes. In contrast, too, with the overcrowded population which presses so closely on the borders of the Forest, we are reminded of those days in 'Green England' when, even in the last century, the red and fallow deer haunted their endless glades and vistas, and drank at the rush-grown pools; when the venerable oaks and beeches harboured birds, which the denudation of heathlands have made so rare—the kite, the great bustard, and the bittern; when picturesque gipsy encampments lent another charm to the silvan scene. The ambitious life of civilisation has banished also from this cool green Forest barrier the primitive hamlets and homesteads that nestled under the grand old trees; the rustic cottages, built of wood, or mud and clay, hardened by the smoke that escaped from an aperture in the roof, and which Hollinshed tells us was considered a 'medicine to keep the goodman and his family from the quack.' But in these 'so homely cottages,' which could not boast the luxury of a glazed window, the Spaniards in Queen Mary's reign saw with amazement 'what large diet was used,' and reported that 'the English have their houses of sticks and dirt, but they fare commonly so well as the king.'

For many centuries, Waltham was a hunting-ground for our kings. Its woods have echoed with the mellow horn and the baying of hounds, as over the soft thick turf many a gallant cavalcade has swept in the splendid pageantry of royal hunts. With the old hunting-tower still standing in the Forest, is associated the name of England's greatest queen, who, inheriting some part of her father's rough masculine spirit, displayed a passion for the chase. The legend runs that Elizabeth on one occasion rode her horse up the broad staircase into the dining-hall of the old lodge at Chingford, whose walls have listened to the romantic gallantry that distinguished the court of the Maiden Queen; they have witnessed, too, the lovesuit of the magnificent Leicester, whose noble form was seen to the greatest advantage in hunting-suit of gold-embroidered Lincoln green, crossed by the jewelled baldric, from which were suspended the bugle-horn and forest knife; and who, in the reflected light of Elizabeth's favour, was a sovereign all but in name.

Indeed, every portion of the ancient Forest is suggestive of unexhausted interest to those who know something of its history. Around its annals group the figures of many royal personages, from Elizabeth in her stately ride to meet her troops at Tilbury Fort, at the period of the Spanish Armada; to Anne, who came to visit the famous oak; Edward III. and Johanna of Navarre, who alike retired amidst its solitudes; Richard II. starting from Havering-atte-Bower on his treacherous ride to Pleshy, the dower-house of many queens—away back to that name dear to the hearts of Englishmen, Harold, last of the Saxon kings.

We read how he loved Waltham—'the town in the weald or wood'—the estate given him by his brother-in-law the Confessor; how as a conqueror after Stamford Bridge, he came to pay his final vows prostrate before the 'miraculous crucifix'; how its name became his battle-cry of 'Holy Cross!' at Hastings; and how he was laid beneath its shadow in the Abbey Church—the simple inscription, 'Hic jacet HAROLDUS infelix,' marking his resting-place.

This far-famed Abbey for Augustin canons was reared by Harold on the site of an old hunting-seat at Waltham, built by Tofig the Proud, a great Danish Theyn, in the time of Canute. It was endowed by Richard I. with the manor of Waltham and 'the Great Wood,' and its mitred abbot possessed unusual rights over the adjoining country and Forest; for in days of old, particularly under the Anglo-Saxon kings, the recesses of the Forest were kept as sacred as the groves of the Druids, by laws harsh and terrible. One of Edward's laws declares: 'I will that all men do abstain from hunting in my woods, and that my will shall be obeyed under penalty of life.' Tradition says that the Confessor's favourite residence was Havering, 'because solitary, shrouded in woods, and fitted for devotion'; also because here he could follow his only pastime of hunting the wild-deer in the forest, which at that time abounded with 'wild beasts, the bull and the boar.'

From a gentle eminence, half-veiled in trees, can be seen a vast expanse of virgin forest, and the borders of six counties. Here are Buckhurst Hill and Golding's Hill, where the adjacent keeper's lodge still looks over the resort of the deer; there Staples Hill, the scene of the midnight assertion of the ancient claim of lopping and topping; farther still, beyond the intervening panorama of heaths and woodland, the valley of the Lea. What far-away forgotten memories are recalled by the placid windings of the river which Drayton says 'still brags of the Danish blood!' Over its peaceful waters has streamed the Raven banner of the Dane, when the dreaded war-ships of the Vikings came to ravage and destroy. Nine centuries have rolled away since Hæsten the Dane towed his vessels up the Lea, and 'wrought a work twenty miles above London.' Here he was attacked, and here he defeated the Saxon thanes.

In earlier times still, in these same flowery meadows of the Lea, lay Alfred, encamped by the sombre woods, waiting whilst the Sea-kings passed defiantly up the stream; but as they disappeared, the Saxons obstructed and divided the waters of the river, and the gilded 'sea-snakes' never returned. What a picture must the Lea have presented, alive with those gallant craft, which were models of ship-building, and filled with the fierce war-sons of the North—those supreme heroes of battle on the seas. And the Vikings, with their kindred tribes, remaining to settle peaceably in permanent homes in the land they had come to devastate, formed part of the Anglo-Saxon population, and as worshippers of Odin, had their incantations for the dead in the heart of Waltham Wood.

Still more remote associations linger around the Forest. Within the ancient boundaries are still to be seen vestiges which recall events that

changed the face of Britain. At Ambresbury Bank are the complete remains of a vast Roman camp made by Suetonius, which cover nearly twelve acres of ground; whilst two miles away in the district of Loughton, lies the recently discovered British camp. In a pitched battle on the classic ground between these two encampments, in 61 A.D., Boadicea, queen of the Icenii, after attacking the Roman settlements and burning London, was defeated by Suetonius. The British heroine, Tacitus informs us, destroyed herself by poison; and all this part of South Britain passed into the Roman division of Flavia Cesariensis.

In this restless nineteenth century, when the din of trade and shriek of railway-whistle echo on the outskirts of the woods, we may well be thankful for the preservation of this beautiful and extensive tract of forest scenery, lying so near the Great Metropolis, within the shadows and silence of which many a weary denizen of the East End of London may forget, perhaps but for a brief holiday, the mean and meagre surroundings of his daily life.

#### MY LOVE.

She steps along the polished mead,  
My true, my only love;  
The white clouds fly in merry speed,  
The great sun smiles above.

The yellow-cups of golden gleam,  
The daisies silver white,  
Uplift their dewy leaves and beam  
A glittering delight.

The lark leaps up before her feet  
With music on his wing;  
The blackbird and the linnet sweet  
Glad songs around her sing.

The crooked thorns in greeting shake  
Their interwoven arms;  
The tufted ash droops low to take  
Full measure of her charms.

The grasshopper blows one keen note  
From out his secret nest;  
And butterflies, like snow-flakes, float  
About her lily breast.

Tall meadow-sweet its perfume breathes  
From every branching stem;  
Bird's-eye with its long tendrils wreathes  
A blue-starred diadem.

Well may ye lift your bold sweet song,  
O birds that fill the air!  
O flowers, well may ye shine and throng  
To see a maid so fair!

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